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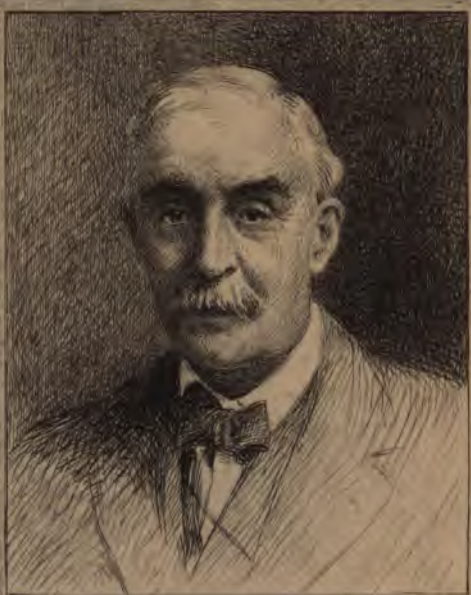
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PRICE SIXPENCE.

EVERY MAN  
HIS OWN ART CRITIC

AT THE

MANCHESTER EXHIBITION,

1887.

BY

PATRICK GEDDES.

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JOHN HEYWOOD,  
DEANSGATE AND RIDGEFIELD, MANCHESTER;  
AND 11, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS,  
LONDON.  
1887.



their every-day experience. In that passing family the child notices only the horses or cattle, the dogs or sheep; the mother passes the landscapes unnoticed, but lingers with Faed over some simple story of domestic pathos; while her husband hurries her on to shake with laughter over one of Erskine Nicol's Irish jokes. Truly, "the eye sees only what it brings with it the power of seeing," and thus it becomes easier to understand how Turner or the pre-Raphaelites were simply unintelligible, not only to the public, but even to the established critics and painters of their day; or how, more recently, the impressionists, like Mr. Whistler on the one hand or the decorative school on the other, had no easy fight to gain recognition; or how, again, to name obvious examples, the peculiar manner and meaning of Rossetti or of Burne Jones must needs to many people seem simply affected, the solemn parables of Watts unintelligible, or the characteristic pathos of Walker or of Mason pass unnoticed altogether.

And if one leaves the gallery to see what has been written about it, one finds essentially the same confusion. Too much, of course, is not criticism at all, but mere more or less childish explanation of the purely literary sort—how in this picture there is a nice little girl being worshipped by her dog, how in the next one home they bring her warrior dead, and so forth—mere verbal paraphrase every word. Some more distinctly artistic criticism there is of course, and one critic is wise if another be wooden. Such criticism is, indeed, often keen with insight and crowded with good things. Yet to profit by this one must know something already; constantly the best judgments are more instinctive than rational, and thus often puzzle as much as instruct the beginner. One critic, too, we find is an enthusiast mainly of brush-work, of technique; another of colour or tone; a third of drawing and composition, of light and shadow, and thus becomes necessarily more or less the advocate of this or the other school; and even when we get down to first principles we find things are no better. Would we take counsel from a traditional expert, and entrust ourselves to the guidance of Mr. Ruskin? Straightway one of the younger generation of critics mercilessly exposes his rather threadbare metaphysics, another protests against his obtrusive love of geological and botanical science, while a third denounces his too eagerly dogmatic morals, crying "art for Art's sake." Yet if you were to follow any one of these newer prophets, the others would all fall upon him and rend him in turn; and hence it is little wonder that plain men in all ages have fallen back upon the hopeless maxim of *de gustibus*—"there's no accounting for taste." Art criticism, moreover, has far too often been mere gibberish of collectors

and connoisseurs, and were this all, people would be little the poorer for leaving it alone. Yet matters cannot always remain thus; new attempts at the exposition and popularisation of Art can never cease to be made, for when a man has once truly learned to "know pictures"—when he really feels how each gallery is a noble treasure-house and each true picture a new revelation; when he comes to it as to a fresh sacrament of beauty, and carries away from it a new element into life—he must needs seek to share his pleasures, even were it only to increase them. Science, too, can nowadays be successfully popularised, so that the very simplest mind can follow the physicist as he watches the marvellous dance of atoms, or the naturalist as he probes the secrets of life; and why should not Art, too, become again as it once was—the every-day possession of the people? Why should we not borrow the secret of science? Armed with its powers of analysis and comparison, every man might indeed become his own Art Critic, no longer asking, "How do you like this?" but "What does this painter mean to show?" We might thus go forth and take far fuller possession of the Exhibition, and carry picture after picture away safely stored in the galleries of memory. We would learn to see the picturesque in everything for ourselves; nay, we might come nearer that secret of Art education, that power of creating beauty which our age, so rich in mechanism, has all but lost, and for the recovery of which the world of industry is now waiting.

The essential notion, therefore, which we have to borrow from science, and with which our criticism must start, is that of an expanding consciousness of the aspects and the order of the universe, which is being steadily added to by the fresh eye of each discoverer. Each addition, indeed, needs a new and active mind to seize, but when once set down for us becomes a common and permanent possession, so that he that runs may read. In this sense, for instance, Linnæus has never died, nor Cuvier, nor Darwin; for every naturalist is a Linnæus when he collects and names his specimen, a Cuvier when he dissects it, a Darwin when he deciphers the story of its evolution. Nor is it otherwise in literature: Burns has brought back for us the poetry of simple human life and love, and Scott has revived the past for us; Wordsworth leads us out to see some new beauty in every wayside, or Browning opens for us strange glimpses into the marvellous complexities which lie in every human soul. Each, in short, is building some contribution to the great whole of individual culture—is adding some new pipe or stop or swell to the organ of human life. Now this summation of not only the results, but even the special faculties and powers of many men of genius for the strengthening and



enrichment of the ordinary life, although well recognised in science, is too little appreciated in the study of literature, and practically not at all in that of Art. Yet the same idea holds good: our painters are travelling on a road fully parallel to that of the men of science; the landscape painter and the naturalist are brethren of the same age and country, and represent, despite their frequent inability to understand each other's language, essentially the same awakening of the human mind. Like so many new discoverers the great painters have come upon us, each opening out a new window into the universe, and showing us something that was before unseen; and thus it is the first aspect of the galleries of a modern exhibition to render visible to us, in new transcripts of earth and sea and sky, new beauties hitherto unnoticed and undreamed. Or, leaving landscape, we see how one artist shows us the human figure in repose, and another sets forth its widely different beauty of action; how one painter opens for us a magic window into the long buried past, and another no less potent enchanter confronts us with some vision of our own every-day lives, or paints us a portrait from whose eyes the soul mutely proclaims all its strength and confesses all its weakness. The first quality of painting we would criticise, and that in which our modern Art ranges so far beyond all that preceded it, lies in this faculty of *vision*; and hence the best starting point for the beginner in Art is to ask modestly from each new picture—What has the painter seen? What is this he would show?

As yet, however, we have no Art in the highest sense: the painter must see and must imitate; but if this were all, a photograph would be often a better work of art than a picture, and might profitably supersede it, as many people indeed used to expect. Here a new secret comes in, that of *arrangement*. Colour must be not only true but beautiful, rich in harmony and contrast; light and shade must be at once broad and subtle, contrasted and gradated; line must be not only faithful, but flowing and rhythmical. From the first point of view, that of sight, the best picture is the best window; but from the second, that in which colour, mass, and line will best stand being looked at upside down! And without pausing to develop or to reconcile these two distinct aspects of pictorial art, we have to notice a third one; for what the painter has seen and how he has displayed it is always modified, though in varying measure, by his *thought*. The picture is, in fact, not only a window through which we look out into the world, but one through which we may also look deep into the painter's soul, and learn what manner of man he was—how he looked into the world, in what spirit he lived and laboured there. In this final field of judgment we learn to push our criticism more deeply than in the preceding

two, and so finally see beneath the imperfect vision, and surely more imperfect rendering, something of the unattainable ideal which consciously or half-consciously lay below.

That thus Art criticism comes to be a matter of indeed difficult yet definite measurement in each of these three directions, and that the results of these are expressed in positive gain of thought and knowledge and beauty, in gold and not in dross, must already become apparent; in short, it is clearly possible for each man to be his own Art Critic, and clearly profitable as well. Let us see, then, how these three principles may be actually put in practice amid the galleries before us.

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## CHAPTER I.—THE ART OF SEEING.

In the preceding pages we attempted to break up the distinct yet subtle and complex whole which we recognise as a painter's style into three elements, which may roughly be termed sight, arrangement, and ideal. We have now to show that the visitor, even with little time and no special knowledge, may in this way guide himself through this maze of pictures and form an intelligent notion of the great movement of modern Art which they represent. Really to take possession of the best types of these galleries, and see the manifold wonders their kaleidoscopic variety has to show, we have to substitute for the customary plan of taking the pictures in the usual way, pretty much as they happen to hang, or even painter by painter, the threefold plan proposed. In the first place, then, let us take a simple interest in what and how much these painters' eyes have seen, and add this to our own experience of life and Nature, to our own power of intelligent vision henceforward. Secondly, we have to make out something of how they have expressed and rearranged the impressions they took in—how they have made their colour-photographs of the world into these works of art; for only when these two things are done, and we understand our painters as observers and workmen, shall we be in a fair way to understand them in their third capacity, *i.e.*, in so far as they are poets and philosophers, humorists or satirists, optimists or pessimists.

Placing ourselves, then, to begin with, in the centre of the expanding field of sight, we have a true standpoint for appreciating the progress of not only our own Victorian Art, but of the vaster history which lies behind and around it. We can watch man as the growing child of Nature, slowly



gaining acquaintance with the world around him, and joyfully seeking to express and represent to himself, alike in colour and in words, in poem and in science, the new discoveries of each widening day. The story is often told of how pre-historic man has left us his pictures and carvings of wild beasts, the difficulties and risks of whose hunting first aroused him into conscious intelligence. What is at once the most primitive and childlike realm of Art was won; and the Assyrian hunting sculptures and the modern animal painters have followed in due consequence to continue the same interests. How the next steps were made, and how the Egyptian came not only to embody and conventionalise his ideal of deity, but to take cognisance of actual human personality and even to represent the events of every-day life, is only now being spelt out for us; but we know better how these two elements of actual and imaginative vision widened and deepened and refined in Greece, or narrowed, coarsened, and died out in Rome. The rude beginnings of Christian Art next appear, and while this develops through the ages of faith the interest in man and Nature scarcely reawakens. This dates not from the Revival of Learning, with its classic affectations, but essentially arises among the Dutch, in the 16th and 17th centuries the foremost people of Europe. Their tremendous struggle for independence developed at once a nation of heroic and manly faces and the desire of recording these, and so was won the strength and individuality of modern portraiture; while the generations of peacefully accumulating wealth and contemplative prosperity which followed their victorious struggles aroused and recorded the hitherto unrealised delightfulness of landscape, and awoke men to the endless beauty of the simplest scenes. The meadows and their cows, the canals and boats, the poplars and windmills seemed suddenly transfigured, yet only because men's eyes had opened; so these things rose from the utilitarian level to the artistic—from being looked at merely as the apparatus of living to being rejoiced in for their beauty among the worthy ends of life. This new-found sense of beauty and power of rendering it spread everywhere: kitchen pots glowed with a new lustre, and apple parings curled with a hitherto unsuspected grace, chasing each other as they lay through a lovely arabesque of line. The poor old wrinkled dame sitting among these had at last found her devoted admirer; the boors at the public-house were laboured on with a greater earnestness of interest than any philanthropist nowadays would dream, for the painter at length was free, with all the world before him and open eyes to see it. Nothing, therefore, seemed any longer common or unclean. How he remained limited and prosaic, and thus necessarily became debased, does not at present concern

us ; it is sufficient to note that, at anyrate from our present standpoint, the most living, real, and natural movement underlying our own, in portraiture and landscape, and not merely in *genre* and still-life alone, is that of the Dutch school. How the learning, the refinements, and conventions of the Renaissance painters were also continued, especially through France and England, we need only note at present as an element of unrealism, for it is the weakness and not the strength in the splendid portraits of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua that their subjects are indeed beautiful English types, but hardly well-characterised individual men and women. And this is one of the most effective lessons of the present Exhibition, which shows better than any past or future one will do how this unrealism in portraiture, continued and exaggerated through two generations of Academicians, came to culminate in the pitiable effigies of royal dolls, which cut so quaint a figure throughout the galleries, especially in contrast with the splendid realities we owe to Watts or Millais, Oules or Holl. In the same way with landscape: the pillared ruin, the reposing shepherds, the brown tree and other stock properties of the Renaissance masters make a hard fight for existence against the live Dutch boors and actual working windmills, as a glance round the early water-colour room well shows. How Wilkie took the manlier side, and still more how Turner secured the victory of naturalism over classicism, utterly throwing aside the one and extending the boundaries of the other, are tales of achievement which will one day rank beside the history of the great discoveries and successful inventions of which the age is so proud; for (what with all its manifold faults and shortcomings is still the greatest Art book yet written) "Modern Painters" claims to be little more than the explanatory chorus of Turner's Saga, that manifold fading record of solitary, all observant wanderings through new and vaster realms of beauty than had before been visible to human eyes. With Art once liberated from imprisonment within prescribed rounds of academic subjects to roam through the universe, the painters sally forth eagerly to seek their fortunes. Weary of well-known scenes, they scatter everywhere in search of fresh ones, the unconscious vanguard of the coming army of modern tourists. Prout roams over Europe, making those priceless records of antique cities long since shattered in the name of progress; Holland settles in Venice, and Roberts wanders through Italy, or with Lewis to the Holy Land; Fielding takes full possession of the English downs, or Stanfield makes a laudable, if not altogether successful, effort to paint the sea; Creswick delineates the peaceful pleasantness of English meadows, and Cooper sets himself down through endless afternoons of sunshine to smooth and tend



his beloved herd of cows; William Hunt teaches us the loveliness of plums and oranges, of birds' nests, and hawthorn bloom; while David Cox rises to a breadth and sanity of grasp of living atmospheric landscape, like the earlier period of Turner. How far these simple painters knew what they were doing does not in the least matter; they were all opening new windows for us, educating us in many ways. And now with these compare the later generation: look, for instance, at the sea pictures upon the walls until you can carry them away and see them at will as windows through the dulllest workroom walls; and go roaming along Hook's breezy shores, bright with pebble and seaweed, until one comes to Graham's sad heavy waves swinging against the misty cliffs. Turning away chilled from these, Colin Hunter will show us how the surface water may be bright and glowing like molten opal; or Macallum let us gaze into the deep translucent green through which the Mediterranean coral-fishers dive: through Brett's vast windows we may look long over the lovely expanse of shimmering placid blue; or finally on the canvases of Henry Moore realise the noblest aspects of ocean yet discerned or recorded. Whether your sense of natural landscape needs to be developed altogether, or to be recovered from beneath the dulness of many years of city life, or only to be freshened and brightened, you cannot do better than gaze long into some of these pictures. Follow Linnell over his waving cornfields; go back again and again from Millais's "Fringe of the Moor" to Graham's "Spate in the Highlands," and see what Nature's moods are really like, and you will thus get, not indeed a knowledge of Art, but the fundamental preparation for it, sincere delight in Nature. No better instances could in fact be found of this characteristic way in which the modern painter no longer aims at producing great works of art by merely devising more and more refined combinations of old impressions, but by opening new windows into reality; by seizing above all things a wealth of new impressions, and thereafter arranging them with such artfulness as he can. In this, of course, lay the soul of the pre-Raphaelite movement, itself only the most clearly accented proclamation of a change which was in progress throughout the world—the artistic reflex of the New Renaissance in which the book of Nature replaces the writings of the Ancients; in fact, a European current upon which the handful of young pre-Raphaelites, with their artistic botany of weeds and ivy leaves, were but so many straws. Thus, looking at animals, Landseer discovers that the placidity of Cuypp's or Cooper's cows and the horrid ferocity of Snyder's dogs were by no means exhaustive of their aspects or character; and so comes to produce those pictorial illustrations of canine virtue and



intelligence which were not so long ago the most popular results of British Art. This idea of sympathy between man and beast, once gained reappears in truer and less exaggerated pathos with Briton Rivière, and is now overflowing with true naturalist catholicity over the whole animal kingdom. Marks has for the time taken possession of the birds, but the Zoological Gardens are far from exhausted, and countless species are still awaiting their pictorial exponents. For the Egyptian beast-gods have, in a finer sense, all to come back to us again.

Yet that humanity, the climax of Nature, must always be yet more clearly central in Art, is perhaps the one maxim which no critic has ever disputed, and it is thus one of the most satisfactory evidences of Art progress that (despite Mr. Horsley and his "British Matron") a laborious discipline in drawing the human figure is becoming increasingly prevalent. Despite our ugly costume, the beauty of the human form is thus being rediscovered and set forth in a spirit far more truly Greek than was that of the Renaissance, as a glance at the sketches even of Michael Angelo or Raphael will show. We have happily got rid of such anatomical pedantry, with its skinned and galvanised muscles, its soulless writhing giants, and instead of this we may trace Poynter's rising power and knowledge through years of labour to its exquisite climax of refined loveliness in the "Visit to Æsculapius," or of rare originality in vivid action in "Atalanta's Race." Or, leaving figure-painting for the present (though in this relation it is impossible to avoid a glance at the noble statues of Leighton and Thornycroft), we come again to personal individuality, and note what a priceless record for future generations there lies in Watts's magnificent series of portraits, and on many another canvas round. Note especially the developed power of vision, the fineness of observation and of insight; see, for instance, how the mingled genius and weakness of Burne Jones speaks from his portraits; or how in Millais's "Gladstone" the right honourable gentleman has no longer any need to speak for six hours to set forth the elements of his complex mind—how, in fact, the historian will yet base his central analysis of the character of this or that statesman far more surely on these historical documents of Millais's than on any written word.

Portraiture, then, we have recovered, though history-painting in the true sense, the reflex of our own time in its greater moments, we have none. To know these greater moments when we see them would need the eye of more than a simple painter. Moreover, our times are too ugly, say the painters, and point to Frith's well-meant efforts in confirmation of this; yet, from our present standpoint, there is some justification

or even the accumulated hideousness of his "Ramsgate Sands," since such uncompromising records will at anyrate always be competed for by museums of anthropology. A far more important (because, as we shall see later, purposeful) attempt at modern realism is Madox Brown's "Work" (47); or, to take only a single minor instance among pictures of this kind, one may name Holl's "Gone" (183). Of course, where picturesque elements have survived from the past, this main difficulty is avoided—witness the admirableness of the subject in Herkomer's "Last Muster" (465). Despite, however, the apparent neglect of it, this supremely difficult problem of thorough realism, of perfectly intelligent grasp and rendering of the facts of actual life around us, is really being worked out, not perhaps very consciously or intelligently, yet as the fashion of the age is, in manifold detail. As we saw the landscape painter to be the analogue and contemporary of the naturalist, so the novelist, who is working out for us in such infinite wealth of detail a widening consciousness of the complex drama of modern life, finds his analogue in the painters of the higher *genre*, who are so well represented in the Exhibition. In short, every type of life and every kind of situation is finding its illustrator. Thus, while Mr. Phil Morris's babies are happily absent, we have admirable pictures of happy children, as those of Millais's "Asleep" and "Awake" (469, 471). The pure simplicity of English girlhood finds its appropriate and constant exponent in the younger Leslie; while the far more complex, mature, and pathetic, yet also gently feminine interests of Marcus Stone follow her history up to its first crisis a few years later. A broader and homelier range is taken up by Faed, and with the accurate local colouring which comes through birth and breeding; though Philip "of Spain" shows how faithfully the Scot abroad can still adopt a new nationality. Nicol, with his merry Irishman, has taken the place of Lever and Lover, while pictures like Fildes' "Village Wedding" (222) give English Art a real hold upon its own villages. Orchardson, too, no longer takes refuge among last century ways and costumes, but for the first time makes supreme pictures with a man in evening dress (384). Who shall say, after that, that our Art is not overtaking reality? A rise of realistic power, of breadth of vision, is strikingly marked in our younger painters, like Langley or Logsdail: "Waiting for the Boats" of the former (1368), "Venetian al Fresco" of the latter (99), is each in its way on the highest line of advance, and takes full rank beside the best contemporary descriptive novel writing.

But in no subject is the progress of Victorian Art so obvious, so immediately apparent, as in that higher speciality of the greater body of R.A.s



of half a century ago—which they were pleased to call historical painting, and from which they were wont loftily to look down upon landscape, genre, and every living form of contemporary Art. This simply amounted to book illustration, usually at the very lowest level of knowledge or imagination, not to speak at present of design or colour. The better work in this line was perhaps that of Egg; the most able and ambitious, fertile and inventive, though peculiarly unreal and ugly, that of Maclise; the most imbecile, probably, on the whole, that of Horsley, though at this end of the Academy the competition has been crowded and keen. The respectable average is best maintained by Ward and Elmore, some of whose pictures are still worth notice, though especially for the light they throw on the history of the English school. Some of Millais's earlier pictures, like the "Bride of Lammermoor" (472), show the influence of this traditional standpoint; yet the spirit of true and false historical painting cannot be better distinguished than by going back to a picture of any of the men just mentioned after being seized by the terrific intensity of Millais's "Escaping Heretic" (404). Yet even pictures so far beyond the lay figures and old clothes of the "historical painters" in the old sense reach only to the confines of historical painting proper. This nowadays has fully developed into the systematic and thorough resuscitation of the past. The historical movement of which Walter Scott was the forerunner has not ended with those petty would-be illustrators of him. It has passed from the realms of romance into that of reality, and whether we open a volume of science or of political economy, or enter a museum or an exhibition, we find that it differs from an earlier one essentially in this historical point of view. Of this historical spirit "Old Manchester"—or, indeed, best of all, this Jubilee Exhibition of paintings itself—is surely a sufficiently obvious evidence. Just as we saw the naturalist and the landscape painter have long been on parallel lines, so it is now with the study of historical and social science. It is a fact even yet far from being sufficiently recognised, for instance, that the consummate flower of classical scholarship and archæology has to be sought not in the Universities of Oxford or Berlin, nor in all of the universities of the world put together, but in the man Alma Tadema. For while the whole race of academic pedants and schoolmasters have been pretending to take us back to Rome, and then generally only given us ten years' penal servitude in their school-rooms, with hard labour over useless dog-Latin exercises, we have but to look through these magic windows, and, lo! we are already there! And while these pictures are of course the central, they are by no means the solitary examples of this systematic revival of an historical period. Sir



James Linton, for instance, is becoming, so to speak, a minor Alma Tadema of the 15th and 16th centuries, and younger painters are taking possession of other and no less profitable fields. In France, for instance, a frequent theme is afforded by pre-historic manners and life, nor could Art and science be more happily associated. The field of possible sight is rapidly filling up, and from the completer illustration of the Aspects of Nature modern Art is working towards an equally exhaustive Iconography of Man.

The objection to pictures of this class is constantly made, that these are still too much mere puppets posed—that the tumult of action, the storm of history, the strife of soul with soul, are not yet given; and this must be, no doubt, largely, though not entirely, conceded. Work, however, like some of Pettie's and Sir John Gilbert's show that the more dramatic elements need not be despaired of. And when we look for this quality, developed with the more serious and elaborate spirit of younger painters and later requirements, we may take Mr. Mitchell's "Hypatia" (67) as a peculiarly hopeful example. The enormous possibilities of such men in the revival of art at the highest level finds no better illustration than in this city, where a single painter, by no means of supreme, although assuredly sterling qualities, has rendered unique public service and example. We refer to Madox Brown's frescoed "History of Manchester," in the Town Hall. In comparison with public achievements of this kind, we see how naturally greater men like Alma-Tadema, Pettie, and Orchardson, Poynter and Leighton, Watts and Burne Jones, despite all their splendid labours, and doubtless hundreds of good though less known men, who hardly get work at all, are simply being lost to us and to themselves, neglected as almost unworked mines, lost for the education of the community, for the raising of all the arts, for the very creation of untold commonwealth, for lack of similar public opportunities. Yet until at length we give them these we shall never know what Art is truly capable of, or even what science truly means.

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## CHAPTER II.—THE SEEING OF ART.

Having now looked from the standpoints of science and utility, and seen that pictures as much as (nay more than) books serve to enlarge our knowledge of Nature and of Man, it is full time to begin the more difficult analysis of them as works of art. We must rise from the discernment of

the true to the enjoyment of the beautiful ; and, having laid a solid foundation of fact and utility, it is time to forget this, and remember how much truth there is in the aphorism, "art for Art's sake." We must learn to look at pictures in the painter's way—to value them, that is, for and in proportion to their art and not merely for the excellence of their record or the interest of their story ; for their colour, in short, apart from their pathos or their ideals. The average spectator is, of course, on his side deeply right : nothing, he feels, is worth seeing but the facts of the world and of human life ; nothing is worth thinking about save the conduct of life ; and his ignorant, yet often pungent criticism of Art, however superficially flippant, always ultimately rests on that as much as did Carlyle's. Yet the artist is also perfectly within his province in denouncing Carlyle and the mass of the public alike as unmitigated Philistines, in maintaining that the intrinsic excellence of his picture as a picture owes nothing to its subject and as little to its meaning, and in retorting to all our criticisms by silently turning his picture upside down and looking at it as complacently as before. It is the object of these pages to reconcile this apparent contradiction by looking at Art from all its sides and seeing the truth in each ; and this involves at once conceding to the painter that he is to be judged neither by the accuracy of his botany nor the extent of his knowledge of costume, but by the beauty of his colour, the quality of his light and shadow, the rhythm of his line. Like the musician or the poet, he has to be judged in the first place by the rules of his own art, and it is certainly neither in stating facts nor in preaching morals that the real qualities of music or poetry can be supposed to lie. Rhythm, variety, melody, harmony, these are standards of excellence in all arts alike. But away with your scientific encyclopædias, your moral and philosophic creeds ! The painter's workmanship, like all other, is a matter primarily neither of head nor heart, but of eye and hand, or else professors and parsons would be painters. Your Royal Academicians are no more academic than they are royal ; Respectable Artificer is all those coveted letters, R.A., really mean (when indeed so much) ; yet it is always a good plan to learn as much as you can from your British workman before you try to lecture him. He knows enough to shut up a scientific prig whenever he sees him, and feels a barrel-organ is no better tuned although it creaks through the hundred and nineteenth psalm.

It is, of course, not possible in this brief compass to supply any full introduction to the mysteries of pure painting, or even offer so systematic an outline as is possible when scientific qualities are before us. Yet one thing may be done—let us try to see what is meant by colour. Do you



feel instinctively that this is the supreme distinction between a good painting and a bad; that this is fundamental absolutely, as rhythm and melody to song; that a picture which has not colour (and they are many) might be an excellent engraving, but has no right to exist as a painting? If so, you have no need to read further; but if, on the other hand, a glance at a nice devotional picture like Mr. Cope's "Contemplation" (287), or at a pretty fancy like Sir Noel Paton's "Oskold and the Elle-Maids" (935), does not make you feel thoroughly pained, exactly as by a huge blot upon the wall or a bedaubed engraving, it is time to realise that your colour-sense is in a bad way—that, in fact, you are not in any true sense seeing pictures. An eye a degree less insensitive will at once feel Maclise's "Baron's Hall" (812) and "St. Agnes' Eve" (803) as garish and ghastly; and so we might construct a scale of destructive criticism. But this, although a too common way, is not the right one. The revival of the colour-sense, dulled or paralysed by the "unloveliness of Manchester," as of all modern life, must be through healthy exercise in reaching higher and higher possibilities of pleasure, not of pain. Look, for instance, at that passing girl among the spectators, with a warm golden sash upon her deep blue dress; there is one of the simplest of colour contrasts. Then see how Goodall—"Rebecca at the Well" (177)—avails himself of this; then how Logsdail (99 and 166) and Woods (307 and 375) employ it in dressing their Venetian women. Look up at MacTaggart's "Message from the Sea" (96): see how the brilliant blue of the sea is accented by the orange of the children. Thence go on to Pettie's "Laird" (107): note the essential colour-idea of the picture, vigorously given by the old man's coat and vest; and then see how this goes through the whole picture. There could be no better or simpler diagram of how a great colourist fuses colour into harmony than this affords. We shall begin to see after this what is meant by the paradox of "equally beautiful upside down." See how the rich mass of vest glows within its blue setting; then how the corn takes up the harmony and the blue follows it everywhere with the contrast, both running over the picture in exquisite ever-varying gradations, like the same chord running up and down the piano; see how the purple of the handkerchief comes sharply in, and then is subtly greyed over the hills; how the colour of the road is gathered up into that of the dog, and so on. In this way we are learning to see colour, but the magical music which can be got out of blue, red, and yellow is only beginning. Then, too, we have seen blues and yellows like Goodall's or Logsdail's, or even MacTaggart's, but never quite like those of Pettie's, transfigured into new colours like those of the "Laird,"



so rich and full, subtle and strong; and again, in the very next picture melting into the most delicate minor key in the gauzy plumage of the "Waterfly" (108). Trace the blues and yellows here gradated up and down the figure and shimmering over the floor; follow the sparkling and pearly greys from the gemmed neck-chain over—everything; and you are getting towards the possession of a new treasure, which its lender gladly and wisely purchased for you with a great price. There is no question of whether you care for Scotch lairds or waterflies in themselves; so far all the better if you dislike the literary motive. Here is a great colourist making the old familiar red, blue, and yellow of your garden plot into rich and new combinations overflowing with possibility of healthy sensuous delight, exactly as a composer does with the old notes of the octave. And there are reasons for thinking it probably even a greater pity for people who do not see the one music than for those who cannot hear the other; but the former are commonest and their opportunities scarcer, and so they go through the gallery and seldom find out that they have "no eye" at all. Look for a little at the possibilities of red; begin with a comparatively simple and decorative painter like Marks, and try to enjoy the splendid plumage of his parrots here and there as simply as you would have done when a child; then see the artistic resources by which all these scattered points of interest are brought together by making the old Ornithologist (131) the brightest red poll of all. This is good ordinary red, and still common property; but pass to that of Millais's "Cardinal Newman" (479)—splendour like this is not only reserved for princes of the church to wear, but for the toilsome victories of princes of the arts to win. And it is worth gazing on with proportionate reverence, worth waiting beside and returning to, until you have had full audience with both princes, and seen how the spiritual glory of the one is established upon the opulence and power of the other. In deeper hues, again, take Pettie's "Besieged" (101), and read not only its dramatic force but the gradations from left to right as they deepen towards the last expression of beaten hopelessness.

So much for blue and yellow and red, as it were, separately (though of course they are never really separate altogether). Let us see what they can do all together. But first take a rest. Cross to the collection of gems on the opposite side of the adjacent transept (221), and look at the opals especially; enjoy their variety, watch how blue and red and yellow here sparkle and blend, sometimes striking out in simple brightness, but generally more or less subdued and refined through varying depths and qualities of pearly grey. Now come back to another Pettie, his "Merry

"Thought" (100), and look first simply at the great space of apparently plain colour at the bottom of the picture between the cabbage leaves and the edge of the frame ; and if your pulse leaps and you see that this plain, uninteresting sandy space is really a vast opal, and that deep set in its pearliness all the colours of the picture are throbbing and flashing, you are learning to see and enjoy colour at last. If this is too subtle, there is still hope ; look down to Seymour Lucas's "Suspicious Guest" (95) on the wall below, a good picture, and convenient, as would be a simpler Pettie ; and (bother the story !) see first the very obvious contrast of copper pot and cabbages in the corner ; then the purple and yellow dancing through each other on both coat and vest ; look more attentively all over the wall behind, until you can see all the blues and reds and yellows in it, and how they are gradated so as to reward the eye for travelling everywhere over its surface ; then, finally, how these colours crystallise out into the ornaments upon the mantel-shelf ; or, finally, before your impressions of the opals fade, take another example of good colour, simpler, too, and more obvious than Pettie's—the opal milestone in Briton Rivière's "His Only Friend" (371), and if you did not know before that milestones in this country were generally each made of one big opal, you have only now to take a walk into the country (of course, before the good impressions of the gallery have all died away) to see for yourself that this may be a visible fact of colour, if not of mineralogy. And in this way the milestones may come to mark a new sort of progress into the world of colour, in which one sees that there is hardly a street or a house even in grey unlovely Manchester where one cannot see, if not the brilliant hues of opal, at any rate the subdued opalescence of the pearly interior of a shell.

To analyse the vivid splendours of such a picture as the "Merry Thought" would far exceed the present limits ; and it is time to be passing to other questions. But it cannot be too much insisted on that the essential fact alike about a picture, as about the image at the back of one's eye, is that it is entirely made up of gradated spaces of colour, of bits of colour mosaic as it were, and of these only ; what we call form and outline being simply intellectual abstractions, judgments acquired in infancy through the sense of touch, and not the essential facts of sight we generally think them at all. Colours, lighter and darker, are all we see, but an infinitude of these ; and the painter's business is, seizing from among these the essential from the accidental, to contrast and harmonise them into a beautiful whole, into a permanent source of sensuous delight to the trained (*i.e.*, observing) eye. Good pictures thus vary in com-



plexity, just as does the colour faculty of people to whom they appeal the matter is exactly parallel to that of music ; a Scotch tune and a great opera are both good, but at different levels. You can trace this progress in some painters, though not in others. Thus, in the superabundant series of Leslie's there is little or none, but in the two Marcus Stone's (123 and 179) one sees how vast may be the reward in personal development of conscientious and thoughtful labour. And even this is in many respects a stationary painter, for the growth in subtlety and refinement has not been accompanied by any proportionate development of colour resources or breadth of artistic range.

We come now to another simple consideration of fundamental importance in seeing pictures as much as in painting them. So great is the actual range between sunshine and darkness compared with our small practicable range between white or yellow and black paint, that the brightest picture (say one of Brett's sea pieces) is but a faint reflection of the glorious reality. So the criticism one so often hears, "Oh, these colours are too bright," is either (and most probably) nonsense, or is a blundering way of saying that the contrasts are stronger than in one's dingy life one is accustomed to notice, or that harmonies seem deficient, or the whole thing out of tone—assumptions that the critic would often find it hard to justify. Millais, for instance, ranges from brightest vermillion to the deep tones of his "Somnambulist" (470), or still further down to the glowing gloom of his "Greenwich Pensioners" (480), and is a colourist all the while. Sir Noel Paton, on the other hand, passes from rainbow hues to night in his "Oskold and the Elle-Maids" (935), and yet every inch one happens to look into seems sicklier and dirtier than all the others. A convenient and easy example in colour discrimination is given by Holl's "Gone" (183), where the saddened purples, olives, and greens of the poor women's dresses are crystallised out of their harmonising background, and it is a good exercise first to follow out the gradations and contrasts of the hues of each dress, and then to follow their lightened or deepened echoes till they die away in every corner of the picture. The non-colourists will then be recognisable without search, as a glance at the absence of either richness, variety, or gradation in a background of Cooper's, or even Landseer's, will show ; but the diminished number of pictures we can after this recognise as positively good will be far more than made up for by our keener enjoyment of them.

Associated with the usual deficiency of colour appreciation and the constant substitution of judgments of form and outline in its place, as also with this ignorance of the limitations of the painter's art of which we have



been speaking, arises another grave misunderstanding usually current. Thus compare two landscapes hanging side by side—Leader's "With Verdure Clad" (109) and Fisher's "Scotch Hillside" (110). Most people like the former, few the latter; and this depends even more upon treatment than subject. Keeping, of course, to treatment only, the first pleases us with its accuracy in drawing and light and shade, and its precision of detail everywhere, from foreground to distance. Hence we think it "natural." The other seems "unnatural," too "indefinite," "unfinished," and so forth. But look at them again through half-closed eyes, so as to blot out the sharpness of detail and see only the masses of the landscape. Now, Fisher's picture is absolutely right, just as would seem the real scene through a window: the road runs on, and the hills are in the distance; while Leader's picture becomes harsh and cold and meaningless. Fisher's picture has kept its tone bright by a certain sacrifice of detail; Leader's has gained its sharpness of drawing, of light and shadow, at the expense of a thorough sacrifice of tone. Look down now at the picture below, Pettie's "Sisters" (104), to see what greys and green are really like, and behold, the meretricious effect of reality in the Leader has vanished, and nothing but tinted engraving remains; whereas, the longer you look at the picture of the more unpretentious artist the better you will like it—the more you will see it would be the one to live with if you had your choice of the two.

We must return to this subject; it is one of the most important in Art, especially just now. But first note what there is of true and false in the popular objection to pictures looking "unfinished." A picture expresses a moment of vision; you do not see everything at once. Thus, when you look at a figure you are only vaguely conscious of the things behind, and the portrait painter's background is right in expressing the same indefiniteness. The old method of subordinating the details, however, lay very much in painting them badly. Thus, in Goodall's "Subsiding of the Nile" (178) the palm trees are rightly intended to be subordinate, but this is no excuse for giving us the same palm twenty times, and this indeed not a palm at all, but only a bunch of feathers tied upon a stick. We don't want botanical details—that would have been pictorially far worse; but we do want some suggestion of the variety and mystery of living verdure. How beautifully this can be done is well shown in the shrubbery of the background of the adjacent picture, by Marcus Stone, "*Il y en a toujours un autre*" (179). Here the local truth is full and true in observation; yet so far from becoming irrelevant or obtrusive, it furnishes one of the most noteworthy elements of the pictorial as well as the emotional

success. But mark how this is by no means so perfectly true in his earlier picture (123): his observant faithfulness in painting foliage and accessories is by no means entirely an advantage to him; he has at first to make sacrifices in concentration for what he is gaining in detail. And the explanation is simple: Art lies not in the richness of your material, but in the way you put it together; yet the first thing you can do when you have gathered a whole armful of new treasures is to tumble them out more or less in a heap. And thus we are ready to understand the history of every great wave of progress, the continuous world-old tragedy: how new and young observers pushed into some new field and brought back a wealth which they could not at first completely manage; for the penalty of abandoning the established resources of Art is that one has no longer the benefit of a long-accumulated experience in combining them, and so the new beauties are not so evident as the unconventionality of their presentation. The critics and the Respectable Artificers, the scribes and pharisees of culture see at a glance the offence against the letter of their law, and with narrow, pitiless conscientiousness denounce it. The public at once take up the cry; the judges say Away with him! he is beaten with many stripes, has often literally to die the death, and, like the starved Millet, he enters the Pantheon only through the Calvary of Art. And whether he thus perish before his prime, or with Turner he succeed in utter isolation in carrying out his ideals, or whether with our own greatest yet meanest living English painter he accepts fame and fortune for abandoning them, his example but discourages his whole generation of less ardent men. Whereas, had men but openness to new truth, and charity in listening to it, they would be enriched by the whole life labour of the teachers of their own generation, and not alone by gathering up the surviving relics of the martyrdoms of the past.

Take, now, the simplest idea of the pre-Raphaelite brethren, their reflection of the contemporary naturalist movement through Turner and "Modern Painters." The glorious wealth upon every mossy stone, the marvellousness of the transparent interlacing grass blades, pearled with dewdrop and golden with sun, the subtleties of faithfully foreshortened leaves had all as yet no interpreter; they had not even been drawn since Dürer. That of course work of this sort did not make a picture was easy to see—it was easy to compare this mode of viewing things with that of an inquisitive beetle, and so forth, especially if you were a middle-aged critic, a Respectable Artificer named Peter Bell, or the like. But the pre-Raphaelites have taken their way, and not only Holman Hunt's "Strayed Sheep" (36) shows with what success, but (what is far more



important) this fuller measure of accuracy soon came to influence other painters, and to bring with it a wealth of new resources, artistic and expressional, henceforth available to all men in that infinite world of life which the old orthodox school had contentedly symbolised by its smudgy grass and its brown trees.

But we are in no danger of failing to enjoy such detail. Granted; our present difficulty lies quite the other way. We saw most people would at first prefer Leader's picture to Fisher's; it is the impressionist view of things which needs at present defenders and exponents. Look out of your windows, over the gardens if possible, and into the country; failing that, at anyrate down the street. You see the detail chiefly; if you were to paint you would draw those distant houses with all their windows, so that one could count them, and you expect your painters to do the same, and then think the picture will be true. But hold your left hand upright against the horizon, so that its lighted edge comes like the side of a picture frame, and gives you a standard of tone. Then notice your foreground, how comparatively strong (it is useful to close one eye, and at first even to half blink through the other); your middle distance, see how much fainter; the distance, how much fainter again. Your picture would be three main masses or belts of tone, would it not? Is it any longer possible to draw those windows with the same precision without doing it with a sharpness which you must reserve for the foreground? You are in a plain dilemma; you must either sacrifice the general truth of your picture or the unimportant details—putting them in means hardness, that is, general untruth. Throw away these details, leaving distant houses windowless, but keep the general truth; your resources admit of wholesale or retail, but not both at once. Here, then, lies the difference between Leader and Fisher, already so fully discussed. Of course, with increasing skill, we can come nearer and nearer reconciling these two aspects; yet there has been no perfectly middle course, and, broadly speaking, our English landscapists tend to sacrifice tone; French ones to insist upon it at all costs. Hence the dissatisfaction people have with an impressionist picture is chiefly an intellectual one; they want to see the windows of the distant house, nay, the very bricks which compose it; and this not because they care about subtlety, but mainly because they know they are there. They want an opera glass, a telescope for distance, and a microscope at hand, and cannot understand a French painter, though he may be truthful as a camera obscura; such effacement of trifling details must at first seem incomprehensible, and such equally proportioned reduction of brightness dull. How rapidly, however, the

impressionist influence is coming upon us a visit to any annual exhibition after this historic one will show. But what is wanted is, not violently, that is ignorantly, to take a side, but to sympathise with both, remembering that truth is wholly with neither; and rejoice as out of these contrasted schools the newer and fuller styles of the future arise.

We have no space for the discussion of composition, but this the reader can make out more easily for himself. Look, for instance, to begin with, at the older pictures: the cows of Cooper, how neatly grouped; at the ships of Cooke (676, 687), or at the ship and windmill of Stanfield (571); see how the separate masses are united into larger ones; how their figures are built into pyramids. In Maclise's "Baron's Hall" you will find them of all sorts and sizes. Compositions so simply triangular as all these are now chiefly employed in the decoration of chocolate boxes; yet they are often very good so far as they go; and are useful as leading up to the more subtle modern employments of the same principles. Begin with Moore and pass to Leighton, thence to Alma Tadema, to see what figure composition really means—how each form and line is interwoven with all the rest. Perhaps the simplest way will be to return to our old friends. See how, in Pettie's "Laird," the upward curve of the dog's tail points to the old man's sleeve, and so suggests the pyramid; how the lines of weed and field and wall lead up to the face; how we are carried on into the distance not only by the path, but called thither by the distant white cottage and the blue figure rhyming faintly to the laird's own. Take, in Briton Rivière's "His only Friend" (371), an example of a simple perfection of harmonious form and line; then see how the figures of Pettie's "Merry Thought" are bound together; or look at Orchardson's "Mariage de Convenance" (380), to see how the lamp and its reflection clasp the distant halves of the picture into one. Try to follow up for the pictures of which the art pleases you most some such analysis, first for colour, and then for composition; and if you care to pursue the subject farther, there is in the Art Museum at Ancoats (which, however unappreciated, has in it more real, because simple, instructiveness than South Kensington and the British Museum put together) a set of excellent diagrams by Shields.

We must hurry on to the remaining way of interpreting pictures—the question of their thought. Yet before leaving the field of pure Art we would wish distinctly to say that progress in enjoyment, and that, moreover, incredibly rapid, is beyond no one's reach, however dull before, who will but begin to look, not for faults (that would be for ugliness), but for beauty. To recover or develop the faculty of artistic vision, perhaps the



central want of our modern industry, and of our pleasure, too, no nostrums of Art Schools and Examinations are needed, but a Healthy Regimen alone; a daily life from which ugliness is steadily going out and into which beauty perceptibly, even if slowly, is coming in. To look at pictures, and from them to nature and life, and thence back and back again alternately, will do much; and to correct, purify, and gradually refine the colour surroundings of one's own home will do far more. That is nowadays the first condition of the asylum and the hospital; simple harmonious colour is turning out to be reposeful and curative both for body and mind far beyond anything that the most sanguine physicians used to dream. Some day soon, therefore, practical people will commence to discern that they need not let their own and their children's bodies and minds go quite so far wrong before they begin to take some little care of them in this very simple and delightful way.

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### CHAPTER III.—THE FEELING OF ART.

Our examination of the complex whole we know as a painter's style into its three elements having now got so far on the lines of following the eager eye which sees, and watching the dexterous hand which renders and arranges, we may try finally whether we cannot also understand and sympathise a little with the head and heart which idealise. In varying measure we see the true and enjoy the beautiful; yet many say, when all is done, But who will show us any good? Nobody wants cheap dogmatic morals, nor pictures which preach at us. The very paintings of Cope and Paton, which we noted when speaking of colour as peculiarly objectionable, no doubt owe their unfortunate existence to the most praiseworthy motives; yet the only result of such inartistic pieties and allegories is to frighten really artistic men from venturing upon imaginative and ideal Art at all. In the same way those feeble æsthetes one sometimes still meets, or at whose caricatures as the inner brotherhood of Postlethwaites, or the like, we have all laughed with *Punch* and the comedians, have done boundless mischief. Yet without some element of the ideal, some tinge of emotion, some "feeling" at any rate, we have no true Art at all, but only soulless photographs of nature, or empty trickeries of technical skill. What, then, is this mysterious element of art which refuses to become materialised as its body, yet is indispensable as its soul?

Let us begin again with the landscape painters, or with the sea. If

those pictures were real windows, people would choose Brett's; yet, as pictures to live with, they would soon prefer Henry Moore's. The first choice would be because we all love sunshine, rolling clouds, and vast expanse of view; the second choice would be not so much for the artistic reason—that the very success of this admirable and praiseworthy painter, in putting more into a picture than ever there was before, is necessarily outrunning his resources in arranging it—as because in the other there is more of the mysterious feeling and associations of the sea. The one shows us a noble spectacle—"Britannia's Realm" indeed, and all the glory of it; but the other makes us feel that we are ourselves of the race of Vikings, and that there is no path through life worth the Swan's. Against the sunny optimism of the first painter, too (for no man can help idealising somewhat), stands out the manlier recognition of the stormy possibilities of life in the other. Then see how differently the Scotsmen look at the sea—how the Celtic melancholy, incipient in Graham's magnificent "Spate in the Highlands," becomes painful and hopeless in his repeated insurances upon the chill mist and the cruel foam at which the crofter of the Western Highlands sits helplessly gazing, and even casts its shadow into the glowing canvas of Colin Hunter. Or coming to land, look attentively (it only needs time to realise) at two pictures by A. W. Hunt, "Leafy June" (31) and "Whitby—Morning" (44), and you will feel how, over and above the wonderful transcripts of fact and nobly beautiful arrangements of colour, there is something more; how the first, filled with the purest delight in Nature, is a true idyl of summer; while from the second comes to us as articulately as from Wordsworth, yet as deeply as from Beethoven, "the still sad music of humanity."

Having thus our third criterion of painting, and having passed from the fundamental criticisms of intellectual range and decorative faculty to that of poetic perception, we may go through the galleries once more. But the question cannot help rising in our town-dulled minds—How far is all this "emotion of colour" real and intrinsic, or imaginary? Are we not simply being urged to see in the pictures what perhaps after all lies only in their literary exposition? Can colours mean anything in themselves? Let us see.

Take again Pettie, whose work is always specially convenient for purposes of analysis; just because the painter is not a supreme one in any direction, but a good sensible artist of special force and variety as a colourist, by no means affected by ideas to the extent of most of his contemporaries, but simply obeying his instincts—in short, a naturally painting animal, whose comparative unconscious ways are therefore all



the more instructive to watch. Look how the Laird's pensive contentment is sympathised with by the blue over gold of his picture; how the sweet little "Sisters" are shining like pearls embosomed in an emerald wood; how the colour of the "Besieged" deepens from blood into darkness; or how the sandbank and its scattered dainties and merry company are shining, gemmed and golden in the sun. Each of these colour schemes may be taken as equally right: decoratively, therefore, on the upside-down principle, it would not matter though he had transposed them; but what would then have come of the emotion of each picture? That essentially depends upon the respective appropriateness of dark and day, of gloom and sun. That our colour emotions are no conventions, but perfectly organic elements of Nature, may be traced everywhere through life. Look at the ritual of the historic churches, and see how the colour of altar and vestments changes round the year with the appropriate emotions to each festival, from the white and gold of Easter to the black of Good Friday: how Christmas comes clad with joyous scarlet, and Advent with solemn purple. These might then be traced to the earlier polytheism, and then again, no doubt, to far earlier times. The colour emotion, then, is elemental, seasonal; it arises with and expresses the changes of the year and day—the joy of spring and of the morning, the fading splendour of autumn and of sunset, the awful solemnity of night. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when it is solely as colour impressions that we become conscious of these at all? That with the blurred impressions and increasing unobservantness of most lives this colour emotion diminishes, or almost disappears, is only too true, yet this all the more proves it to be organic. The artist is thus no unaccountable prodigy of genius, but simply a child who has retained and developed his natural delight in brightness and colour; and in happier conditions this might be less the exception than the rule. Just as the decorative aspect of his art lies in arranging these in pretty ways, so the feeling—the poetic quality of it—lies in his command of these elemental tones and feelings, and his power of composing them into music rendered visible, lyric or lovesong, idyl or epic, dirge or psalm.

How this is carried out we may follow into detail. In the simple case just before us (100) note how the red naturally glows under the soldier's armour, how the monk's robe suits his character of joviality peeping through restraint, or how the jester's brilliant gaiety is tinged by a minor chord of sadness. That the poetic value of a picture depends partly also upon other elements is shown by the very variable residuum which survives its translation into black and white; but we need not stop to measure those

minor factors of expression so long as we do not ignore them. In seeking to appreciate these highest qualities of Art we shall soon find that they occur in no definite or constant proportion to the preceding ones of sight or skill. Hence it is in our day that men have at last gone back, weary of the observant subtleties of the Renaissance schools, to delight in the works of comparatively ignorant and unskilful masters, and read their *Divine Comedy*, though written in the faded archaic character of the Middle Age. We should come, then, to have more comprehension of the pre-Raphaelites and their contemporary representatives in Burne Jones and his companions, and more sympathy with their limitations; to forgive their timid shrinking from a sordid, unintelligible every-day world, in reverent gratitude for the saintly vision of its spiritual ideals. Certainly the masters who reach the poetic level are often inferior in respect of sight and skill, nor does progress in either of these qualities alone necessarily involve the third. Yet their relation is as in the other arts. Take, for instance, architecture, where, as the resources expand and the technical powers develop, there is some proportional possibility of higher expression, which, however, is far from reached by every master or school. In more general terms, a man's ideals should develop with his knowledge and his powers, yet in too many of us they sadly fail to rise with these, though in the best they keep hastening beyond. Hence it is that the world's small wealth of idealised vision has come mostly from simple men in poor and quiet surroundings, from ancient Italian cloisters, from Barbizon village, from poor engravers' garrets, and the like, and but little from the grand studios of modern capitals. Your Respectable Artificers and the multitude of ambitious aspirants upon whom they sit can never have much of this; for though living in a big house in London upon your youthful impressions of nature, and going out to dinner as often as you can to sell them, is an ideal certainly, it is incompatible with many others. The deepest misfortune of the modern painter is, that while the church has long ceased to keep the old ideals before him, out of the babel of modern literature he has scarcely yet begun to see the new ones emerge. The wonder, then, is that he has not even more utterly sunk down into the ordinary commercial world in which he must earn his bread; and what he still expresses to us shows how much more lies waiting to be aroused. Instead of this endless labour on little panels, scattered hither and thither to flap idly upon rich men's walls, grant any of these painters one continued task for his fellow-citizens, old or young—make him work for hall or school, for street or square, and see the result; see how the dormant thoughts will flash into activity, and the languid nerves be strung. Give



Alma Tadema his university, and see him quadrupled; or give our friend Mr. Pettie a city hall, and see what a waking up there would be! But in this gallery of the past half-century of evil times for Art we must rejoice over such higher artistic life as we can find, and not too harshly judge its comparative absence. And, however we may regret the scarcity of highest Art, we must not fail praisefully to rejoice over that breadth of tender landscape, that wealth of domestic pathos, and that reverent presentation of pure womanhood which make up the chief wealth of our English school.

We have already noted the achievements of the historical and the decorative painters; a single picture like Leighton's "Daphnephoria" is enough to show that Art is not wholly waiting for new ideals or social impulses and opportunities. In some ways, though we lose in public result, we may gain something in personal idiosyncrasy, for solitude and self-concentration have been needed to develop the singular personality of Rossetti or Burne Jones. The painter is left freer to express himself, although it be in a more limited way, and thus from his works we can decipher his life history and read his message to us with peculiar clearness. See in Rossetti how the first physical ideal of womanhood in the "Blue Bower" refines into that of the "Beloved," the best work of the first period and indeed, in purely artistic aspects, of all. Then, when death strikes off half his life, and leaves him brooding in melancholy, the new series of visions arises, and all those idealisations of lost love which comforted Dante of old come back and take new forms in verse and colour. But it is not needful to discuss examples so comparatively intelligible as these; and Watts and Burne Jones soon yield their meaning to a little patient study. Get into sympathy in the first place, and get rid of your prejudices, if you still have any, that these absurdly-called "aesthetic" painters are so unreal. Begin with two pictures of chivalry—one (Gaston de Foix, 774) of the respectable old Philistine school; appropriately, in fact, by a former president of the Respectable Artificers, the famous Sir Charles Eastlake, who only died in 1865. In this wondrous art treasure see the brown tree, the castle, the fayre ladye, best of all the knight, in newly-japanned armour, who has appropriated and is endeavouring to conceal the sign of the American tin shop where he bought it. Then from the Academy turn to the Grosvenor; leave Philistia and enter Camelot; and look at Burne Jones's "Chant d'Amour" (205), and you will soon understand its merits from every one of our three points of view.

Less obvious, perhaps, to begin with, are the idealisations of landscape. Here the intellectual presentation is far less clear and conscious even to

the painter's own mind than with figure subjects; yet even in these a man's mind and history may be written clearly, whether of progress or decline. This, again, may rouse scepticism, at least in those minds to which pictures are the mere chance fragments of a show; yet more accurately what we should have said was not that a man's spiritual life-history *may* be written in his art, but that it invariably is and must be. That character expresses itself in literature is not denied—in music even is not denied; in handicraft, in business, even in handwriting are also mere commonplaces; how much more, therefore, is this one human occupation in which the faculties of all the rest unite! What else determines range and choice of subject, what else selects mode of treatment, and what so unerringly measures and records the health alike of body and mind as this continuous sum of daily toil, this skill and style accumulating through life? A series of pictures comes, therefore, to be the truest of all possible autobiographies, for what we want from these, after all, is to put character into the confessional, and not simply follow individual incident. And here again the colour emotion is of especial value. Take, for instance, the landscapes of Müller (Gallery 8): see how the driving clouds, bending trees, the mingled rain and sun, most of all the marvellous water struggling through those twisted obstacles which recur in picture after picture, set before us the battle of a proud, passionate, strenuous, yet somewhat limited, soul, struggling with every difficulty of art and life at once, as clearly as could a poem; and thus few need be the sceptics who have to turn to his written words of bitterness upon the back of his main picture to confirm this.

With more varied range and interest, too, is the same life-tragedy told in the peculiarly notable series of works by Frederick Walker. One picture there is ("The Peaceful Thames," 685) of golden afternoon, yet well-nigh spent; of richest autumn, yet quiet and pensive; of fair lithe youth, yet languid and reposeful; and around this in every picture the varying chords of pathos deepen. In the "Old Gate" (684) every figure and tree alike is suffused with sympathy or sadness; in the "Plough" (682) we have the fierce intensity of struggling labour that the field may be finished before the lurid splendour dies from the cloud, and the cold stealing night has come; and we see that the plougher is the painter's eager soul, and the toiling horses are his flagging strength. The woman speeding with her burden through the darkening snow tells the same story in the briefest way. The "Harbour of Refuge" is but a fuller and bitterer version: the old courtyard is the world, with its order statue-fixed; its types of unlovely and ignoble age alone seem to survive; the



young must live in solitude and perish in suffering; for now the painter's self looks from the drooping face of the fair girl who will so soon meet the ominous grim mower on the one side and so at last part company with the grimmer crone who has taken fast hold of her upon the other. And the same face looks at us once more in the delicate boy toiling along the bleak wet road with the heavy, hard old hand upon his shoulder; and then the poor painter steps out of life. The pathos here is deeper and truer, if simpler, than Rossetti's, and more pictorial, if less symbolic.

Here, of course, the prevailing note is one of pessimism, often more bitter if less desolate than that which shines in Cecil Lawson's adjacent moonlight ("Strayed," 677), or lies upon his haunted pool ("Wet Moon," 867). Yet optimism and pessimism are seen best by the reflected lights each cast upon the other. Thus Walker is pessimist in the main, for the night is coming fast and labour soon must stop unfinished; yet the clouds are glorious while they last, and every spot of earth glows with a strange beauty. But pass now to Mason, whose works run on in lovely series on the next wall, and with these, too, Pinwell's water-colours (Room 13) should be looked into; finally, also, those of Walker, especially noting his own eager face (1785). These now constitute a small but well-marked school, limited somewhat in range of subject, without superlative intellectual or artistic faculty; with admitted shortcomings in point of art, yet subtle in observation and full of skilful care. Their special eminence lies, then, essentially within our third category, and this deep poetic feeling of theirs is genuinely pictorial, not literary; although much remains in their engravings, it rests rightly upon the central artistic base, that of the emotion of colour, which, on its pathetic side, they have uniquely developed. And what is their theme? The very humblest: no piled-up magnificence of all things terrestrial and celestial into landscape like Turner's; no great men or stately ladies, like the portrait painters; no encyclopædic knowledge of the classic past, like Alma Tadema; no Faust-like magic of Poynter or Leighton to bring its loveliest forms back from the shades; what they have seen and limned and loved are only the common English waysides and the simple peasant folk they used to meet. Yet they have treated these in a new way: not brutalising them with the coarse old Dutch realism (which was not realism, but vulgar caricature); nor idealising them with the silly old French sentiment (which was not sentiment, but cheap millinery); for these two points of view have passed away for thinking men since the French Revolution, though here and there, of course, your Respectable Artificer still turns a penny by continuing the manufacture of reflections of them. Nor do they treat their figures like

the last generation of painters we may say universally ; that is, as entirely characterless units, to be herded or isolated, employed or cast out, as one's own temporary interest (*i.e.*, convenience, taste) requires ; though of course one must not quarrel with the average painter for looking at the people exactly as his patron did—exactly as did the politicians and the manufacturers and the public, with all their parsons and editors and political economists—in fact as all Manchester was accustomed to do. For if a “common man” is only fit to carry a pick, and the most profitable use you can make of a woman is to employ her to weave calico or shawls, then the painter, of course, could do nothing more with either of them than to set the man picking with his back towards us in the ditch, and give the woman a petticoat and a red shawl to go down the road to the vanishing point.

But if the painter must not nowadays represent Hodge as fighting or intoxicated, nor yet in silk stockings and with a crook, and if even hedging and ditching is not good enough for him, and he is not simply to be regarded as a pawn of colour to be given employment to exactly where and when he contributes to your resources, what is the poor “landscape painter with figures” to do ? His scanty capital is vanishing, he has no more situations left ; they will be in insurrection directly, those figures, and a red flag, a crowd, or at best an explosion will be one's only remaining pictorial resource. Socialism is in the wind ; alas for the good old times ! Had we not better be giving up Nature—it does not pay any longer—and be getting home to our clothes-chest and lay figure, and so perhaps get a new historical idea ? That is what the painters generally do ; but there is no harm done ; it is only their lay figures they have been seeing all the time ; they have been carrying them round, though they did not notice it.

But they are very clever people, the French, and have very clever artists, too ; and a century ago they found out that a peasant had rights, and a vote, and all sorts of things that you could talk about most beautifully, and even make a new religion out of ; and then two generations later, after they had dug up pre-historic man, and knew all about him, one of their artists caught sight of a real live peasant in the fields, and drew him, sowing and what not ; but they starved the discoverer to death because he said poor Jacques had a soul. And two or three English heretics like Mason came round to that opinion, too, and there are some folks who fear such unsettling ways of thinking will spread.

Mason, however, unlike most of these painters, is no pessimist, yet he never lacks the note of sadness ; the sun does not fully shine, and even when it sets in glow the gathering clouds take sober colouring. Yet his



